

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00 CIEP-02 COME-00

DODE-00 EB-11 FEA-02 H-03 INR-10 INT-08 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 OMB-01 PM-07 RSC-01 SAM-01 SCI-06 SPC-03 SS-20

STR-08 TRSE-00 /128 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:SEWARD:JFC

APPROVED BY NEA/ARN - MR. KORN

AID/SA - MR. TEMPLETON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP, JO., U.S.

SUBJECT: EXXON AND US STEEL INTEREST IN JORDAN

1. DEPARTMENT ARRANGED MEETINGS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF ABOVE-NAMED FIRMS AND DR. SALEM MARCH 14 AND 15 TO DISCUSS JORDAN'S COPPER DEPOSITS AND OTHER MINERAL POTENTIAL. DURING COURSE OF THESE MEETINGS WE INFORMED BOTH SALEM AND COMPANY REPS THAT USG WOULD BE PREPARED TO FINANCE A STUDY OF JORDAN'S COPPER RESOURCES AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A PILOT PLANT BY HIGHLY RESPECTED BATTELLE INSTITUTE. AID IS ATTEMPTING TO FIND ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THIS PURPOSE. THIS WOULD MAKE USG FULLY COMPETITIVE WITH FRENCH ON COPPER. SALEM WELCOMED THIS OFFER AND SAID IT ENABLED GOJ TO REOPEN QUESTION OF APPROPRIATE PARTY TO SURVEY COPPER RESOURCES. DECISION TO FINANCE BATTELLE STUDY ENABLED EXXON AND USS TO EXPRESS TENTATIVE INTEREST IN JORDAN COPPER PENDING OUTCOME OF STUDY.

2. SALEM SAW FOREST HOGLAND, EXXON VP IN CHARGE OF MINERAL
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ACTIVITY AND JACK FROST, COPPER EXPERT, ON MARCH 14.

EXXON EXPRESSED INTEREST IN JORDANIAN COPPER, AND IT WAS AGREED THAT SOMEONE FROM COMPANY - PROBABLY FROST - WOULD VISIT JORDAN IN NEXT MONTH FOR A PERSONAL LOOK AT JORDAN'S MINERAL POTENTIAL. SALEM PUSHED EXXON HARD TO LOOK FOR OIL IN JORDAN, SAID HE WOULD MAKE A "VERY ATTRACTIVE CONCESSION," BUT FAILED TO ELICIT A POSITIVE RESPONSE. EXXON DID NOT, HOWEVER, RULE OUT POSSIBILITY OF TAKING ANOTHER

LOOK AT JORDAN'S OIL POSSIBILITIES.

3. ALSO ON MARCH 14 TWO VICE PRESIDENTS OF USS APPEARED UNEXPECTEDLY AT BLAIR HOUSE AND HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH SALEM ON POSSIBILITIES OF USS ACTIVITIES IN JORDAN WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON PHOSPHATE. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY SCHEDULED MARCH 15 CALL BY PAUL GLASER OF USS. DURING MEETING SALEM EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO ENTERTAIN POSSIBILITY OF USS PARTICIPATION IN EXPLOITATION OF JORDANIAN PHOSPHATE AND COPPER. GLASER'S VISIT WAS BASICALLY A COURTESY CALL, BUT HE EXPRESSED STRONG USS INTEREST AND SAID HE PLANNED TO VISIT AMMAN FOR FIRST-HAND OBSERVATIONS AS SOON AS HE IS ABLE TO TRAVEL, PROBABLY WITHIN NEXT SIX WEEKS.

4. IT WILL BE TO MUTUAL ADVANTAGE OF U.S. FIRMS AND GOJ IF NATIONAL RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION AND DR. SALEM ARE FULLY PREPARED FOR UPCOMING VISITS. REPRESENTATIVES OF USS AND EXXON WILL WANT TO SEE ALL AVAILABLE MATERIAL AND STUDIES ON MINERAL RESOURCES AND WILL WISH TO VISIT SITES AND INSTALLATIONS. WE WILL GIVE EMBASSY ADVANCE NOTICE OF THEIR TRAVEL PLANS. WE HAVE ASKED BOTH FIRMS TO CALL AT DEPARTMENT BEFORE GOING OUT TO JORDAN.

5. SUGGEST EMBASSY FILL CROWN PRINCE IN ON ABOVE EFFORT WE HAVE MADE TO BE HELPFUL.

6. IT WAS OUR IMPRESSION FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH SALEM THAT LETTER OF INTENT WITH FRENCH HAS NOT BEEN SIGNED BY GOJ. SALEM SAID HE EXPECTED LETTER WOULD BE WAITING FOR HIM UPON HIS RETURN. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S COMMENTS ON THIS IN LIGHT AMMAN 1428, JUST RECEIVED BY DEPARTMENT. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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7. RE EXXON INTEREST IN JORDAN, FIRM IS UPSET THAT A SWISS-CANADIAN, STEPHEN LOW, HAS BEEN PURPORTING TO REPRESENT EXXON IN JORDAN. LOW HAS NO AUTHORITY TO ACT IN EXXON'S NAME AND HAS BEEN SO INFORMED BY CABLE. CAN EMBASSY PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION ON LOW? KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE054821
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: SEWARD:JFC
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740058-0600
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740331/aaaabdhq.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 AUG 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <05-Sep-2002 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EXXON AND US STEEL INTEREST IN JORDAN
TAGS: BEXP, JO, EXXON, US STEEL CO
To: AMMAN
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005